

REGION 6 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

TOPIC: San Jacinto River Waste Pits Superfund Site

DATE: July 10, 2015

CONTACT: Gary Miller (5-8318)

PURPOSE: Harris County Request for Meeting with Regional Administrator

BACKGROUND:

The San Jacinto Superfund site consists of former waste pits used for disposal of paper mill wastes containing dioxins. The pits are located at the San Jacinto River & I-10, Channelview, Harris County, TX. The Potentially Responsible Parties (PRPs) conducted a removal action with EPA oversight that was completed July 2011. The removal action included placement of a cap over the waste pits to prevent further releases of hazardous waste to the San Jacinto River. The PRPs are conducting a Superfund Remedial Investigation and Feasibility Study that is scheduled for completion in June 2016.

TECHNICAL CONCERNS:

Harris County & Texas Parks & Wildlife Department recently received a settlement of \$20,000,000 from the PRPs for non-CERCLA penalties. Harris County wants to work with EPA in conducting additional investigations for the San Jacinto waste pits. In addition, Harris County is requesting that EPA use its authority to order International Paper to produce 44,000 documents.

CURRENT STATUS:

The EPA is undertaking additional sampling and remedy evaluation for the San Jacinto waste pits. The EPA met with Harris County and other agency representatives on June 11, 2015, to discuss proposed sampling. The EPA received a letter from Harris County dated June 19, 2015, with a proposed sampling approach for pore-water, surface water, sediments, and placement of groundwater monitoring wells. EPA is currently developing a site sampling approach using Harris County and other input, and then will direct the PRP group to perform sampling with EPA dive team used to place & retrieve the pore-water samplers. Expect draft scope to partner agencies this week (by July 17, 2015).

The draft Corps of Engineers report that is evaluating cleanup alternatives is expected before the end of July 2015. EPA will provide this report to partner agencies (TCEQ, Harris County, and Port of Houston) for review/comment. The final Corps report will be used to complete the Feasibility Study that is used to fully evaluate cleanup alternative for the site and includes cost estimates for the alternatives. Anticipate Record of Decision issued in June 2016.

ENVIRONMENTAL/PUBLIC HEALTH CONCERNS:

On June 19, 2015, the Texas Department of State Health Services released its report, "Assessment of the Occurrence of Cancer in East Harris County, Texas, 1995-2012". TDSHS has since formed a panel of subject matter experts to review statistically significant cancers identified in the assessment and evaluate whether follow-up epidemiologic study is recommended and feasible. The group will include internal and external experts in epidemiology, oncology, and toxicology, as well as a citizen to represent the community's interest. EPA Region 6 was asked and will participate in the panel discussions. The first call is scheduled for July 24, 2015.

REGULATORY/LEGAL REQUIREMENTS:

The 44,000 documents Harris County is seeking are from the PRPs' privilege log in the County's suit against the PRPs. They are not the types of documents normally reviewed by EPA as part of a response action, even though they are related to the site work. However, there is a small subset of documents related to sampling analysis which EPA may seek to have produced, because to withhold

these documents could create an adverse public perception regarding the validity of the sampling results.

COMMUNITY CONCERNS/OUTREACH

Harris County and the Texans Together community group were contacted separately regarding potential use of settlement funds. The suggested uses include (in no order): (1) infrastructure for water & sewer; (2) health studies; (3) residential soil sampling; (4) new lab equipment for Harris County Pollution Control; (5) creation of wildlife/nature preserves; and (6) educational/memorial center.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Continue to work with Harris County & others on the sampling plans. Also, request from Harris County a list of withheld sampling analysis documents & obtain those documents from PRPs.



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